

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AGREEMENT BETWEEN
CHAPTER 13 DEBTORS AND THEIR ATTORNEYS**

(Court-Approved Retention Agreement, Use for cases filed on or after September 19, 2016)

Chapter 13 gives debtors important rights, such as the right to keep property that could otherwise be lost through repossession or foreclosure, but Chapter 13 also puts burdens on debtors, such as the burden of making complete and truthful disclosures of their financial situation. It is important for debtors who file a Chapter 13 bankruptcy case to understand their rights and responsibilities in bankruptcy. In this connection, the advice of an attorney is often crucial. Debtors are entitled to certain services from their attorneys, but debtors also have responsibilities to their attorneys. In order to assure that debtors and their attorneys understand their rights and responsibilities in the Chapter 13 process, the judges of the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois have approved this agreement, setting out the rights and responsibilities of both debtors in Chapter 13 and their attorneys, including how their attorneys will be paid for their services in the Chapter 13 case. By signing this agreement, debtors and their attorneys accept these responsibilities.

The Bankruptcy Code may require a debtor's attorney to provide the debtor with certain documents and agreements at the start of the representation. The terms of this court-approved agreement take the place of any conflicting provision in an earlier agreement. This agreement cannot be modified in any way by other agreements. Any provision of another agreement between the debtors and the attorney that conflicts with this agreement is void.

A. *BEFORE THE CASE IS FILED*

THE DEBTOR AGREES TO:

1. Discuss with the attorney the debtor's objectives in filing the case.
2. Provide the attorney with full, accurate and timely information, financial and otherwise, including properly documented proof of income.

THE ATTORNEY AGREES TO:

1. Personally counsel the debtor regarding the advisability of filing either a Chapter 13 or a Chapter 7 case, discuss both procedures (as well as non-bankruptcy options) with the debtor, and answer the debtor's questions.
2. Personally explain to the debtor that the attorney is being engaged to represent the debtor on all matters arising in the case, as required by Local Bankruptcy Rule and explain how and when the attorney's fees and the trustee's fees are determined and paid.
3. Personally review with the debtor and sign the completed petition, plan, statements, and schedules, as well as all amendments thereto, whether filed with the petition or later. (The schedules may be initially prepared with the help of clerical or paralegal staff of the attorney's office, but personal attention of the attorney is required for the review and signing.)
4. Timely prepare and file the debtor's petition, plan, statements, and schedules.
5. Explain to the debtor how, when, and where to make all necessary payments, including both payments that must be made directly to creditors and payments that must be made to the Chapter 13 trustee, with particular attention to housing and vehicle payments.

6. Advise the debtor of the need to maintain appropriate insurance.

B. AFTER THE CASE IS FILED

THE DEBTOR AGREES TO:

1. Make the required payments to the trustee and to whatever creditors are being paid directly, or, if required payments cannot be made, to notify the attorney immediately.
2. Appear punctually at the meeting of creditors (also called the "341 meeting") with recent proof of income and a picture identification card. (If the identification card does not include the debtor's social security number, the debtor must also bring to the meeting a social security card.) The debtor must be present in time for check-in and, when the case is called, for the actual examination.
3. Notify the attorney of any change in the debtor's address or telephone number.
4. Inform the attorney of any wage garnishments or liens or levies on assets that occur or continue after the filing of the case.
5. Contact the attorney immediately if the debtor loses employment, has a significant change in income, or experiences any other significant change in financial situation (such as serious illness, marriage, divorce or separation, lottery winnings, or an inheritance).
6. Notify the attorney if the debtor is sued or wishes to file a lawsuit (including divorce.)
7. Inform the attorney if any tax refunds to which the debtor is entitled are seized or not received when due from the IRS or Illinois Department of Revenue.
8. Contact the attorney before buying, refinancing, or selling real property, and before entering into any loan agreement.
9. Supply the attorney with copies of all tax returns filed while the case is pending.

THE ATTORNEY AGREES TO:

1. Advise the debtor of the requirement to attend the meeting of creditors, and notify the debtor of the date, time, and place of the meeting.
2. Inform the debtor that the debtor must be punctual and, in the case of a joint filing, that both spouses must appear at the same meeting.
3. Provide knowledgeable legal representation for the debtor at the meeting of creditors (in time for check-in and the actual examination) and, unless excused by the trustee, for the confirmation hearing.

4. If the attorney will be employing another attorney to attend the 341 meeting or any court hearing, personally explain to the debtor in advance, the role and identity of the other attorney and provide the other attorney with the file in sufficient time to review it and properly represent the debtor.
5. Timely submit to the Chapter 13 trustee properly documented proof of income for the debtor, including business reports for self-employed debtors.
6. Timely respond to objections to plan confirmation and, where necessary, prepare, file, and serve an amended plan.
7. Timely prepare, file, and serve any necessary statements, amended statements, and schedules and any change of address, in accordance with information provided by the debtor.
8. Monitor all incoming case information (including, but not limited to, Order Confirming Plan, Notice of Intent to Pay Claims, and 6-month status reports) for accuracy and completeness. Contact the trustee promptly regarding any discrepancies.
9. Be available to respond to the debtor's questions throughout the term of the plan.
10. Prepare, file, and serve timely modifications to the plan after confirmation, when necessary, including modifications to suspend, lower, or increase plan payments.
11. Prepare, file, and serve necessary motions to buy or sell property and to incur debt.
12. Object to improper or invalid claims.
13. Timely respond to the Chapter 13 trustee's motions to dismiss the case, such as for payment default, or unfeasibility, and to motions to increase the percentage payment to unsecured creditors.
14. Timely respond to motions for relief from stay.
15. Prepare, file, and serve all appropriate motions to avoid liens.
16. Prepare, file, and serve a notice of conversion to Chapter 7, pursuant to § 1307(a) of the Bankruptcy Code and Local Bankruptcy Rule 1017-1.
17. Provide any other legal services necessary for the administration of the case.

C. TERMINATION OR CONVERSION OF THE CASE AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER APPROVING FEES AND EXPENSES

1. Approved fees and expenses paid under the provisions set out below are generally not refundable in the event that the case is dismissed prior to its completion, unless the dismissal is due to a failure by the attorney to comply with the duties set out in this agreement. If such a dismissal is due to a failure by the attorney, the court may order a refund of fees on motion by the debtor.
2. If the case is dismissed after approval of the fees and expenses but before payment of all allowed fees and expenses, the order entered by the Bankruptcy Court allowing the fees and expenses is not a judgment against the debtor for the unpaid fees and expenses based on contract law or otherwise.
3. If the case is converted to a case under Chapter 7 after approval of the fees and expenses under this agreement but before the payment of all fees and expenses, the attorney will be entitled to an administrative claim in the Chapter 7 case for any unpaid fees and expenses, pursuant to § 726(b) of the Bankruptcy Code, plus any conversion fee the attorney pays on behalf of the debtor.

D. RETAINERS AND PREVIOUS PAYMENTS

1. The attorney may receive a retainer or other payment before filing the case but may not receive fees directly from the debtor after the filing of the case. Unless the following provision is checked and completed, any retainer received by the attorney will be treated as a security retainer, to be placed in the attorney's client trust account until approval of a fee application by the court.



The attorney seeks to have the retainer received by the attorney treated as an advance payment retainer, which allows the attorney to take the retainer into income immediately. The attorney hereby provides the following further information and representations:

- (a) The special purpose for the advance payment retainer and why it is advantageous to the debtor is as follows:
Client understands that any funds that client is rendering to The Semrad Law Firm, LLC as part of the advance payment retainer shall immediately become the property of The Semrad Law Firm, LLC in exchange for a commitment by The Semrad Law Firm, LLC to provide the legal services described above. Said funds will be deposited into the main bank account owned by The Semrad Law Firm, LLC and will be used for general expense of the firm. Client further understands that it is ordinarily the client's option to deposit funds with an attorney that shall remain client's property as security for future services. However, The Semrad Law Firm, LLC does not represent clients under such a security retainer because the preparation of a bankruptcy cases requires many disparate tasks and functions for the attorney and support staff; some of which require legal expertise while other may be only ministerial in nature. Client further understands that the benefit that client is receiving under the fee arrangement is the commitment of The Semrad Law Firm, LLC to perform any and all work reasonably necessary to represent client's interest absent any extraordinary circumstance.
- (b) The retainer will not be held in a client trust account and will become property of the attorney upon payment and will be deposited into the attorney's general account;
- (c) The retainer is a flat fee for the services to be rendered during the chapter 13 case and will be applied for such services without the need for the attorney to keep detailed hourly time records for the specific services performed for the debtor;
- (d) Any portion of the retainer that is not earned or required for expenses will be refunded to the client; and
- (e) The attorney is unwilling to represent the debtor without receiving an advanced payment retainer because of the nature of the chapter 13 case, the fact that the great majority of services for such case are performed prior to its filing, and the risks associated with the representation of debtors in bankruptcy cases in general.

2. In any application for compensation, the attorney must disclose to the court any fees or other compensation paid by the debtor to the attorney for any reason within the one year before the case filing, including the date(s) any such fees were paid.

E. CONDUCT AND DISCHARGE

1. *Improper conduct by the attorney.* If the debtor disputes the sufficiency or quality of the legal services provided or the amount of the fees charged by the attorney, the debtor may file an objection with the court and request a hearing.

2. *Improper conduct by the debtor.* If the attorney believes that the debtor is not complying with the debtor's responsibilities under this agreement or is otherwise engaging in improper conduct, the attorney may apply for a court order allowing the attorney to withdraw from the case.

3. *Discharge of the attorney.* The debtor may discharge the attorney at any time.

F. ALLOWANCE AND PAYMENT OF ATTORNEYS' FEES AND EXPENSES

1. Any attorney retained to represent a debtor in a Chapter 13 case is responsible for representing the debtor on all matters arising in the case unless otherwise ordered by the court. For all of the services outlined above, the attorney will be paid a flat fee of \$4,000.00
2. In addition, the debtor will pay the filing fee in the case and other expenses of \$371.76
3. Before signing this agreement, the attorney has received, \$350.00
toward the flat fee, leaving a balance due of \$3,650.00 ; and \$61.76 for expenses,
leaving a balance due of \$4,021.76
4. In extraordinary circumstances, such as extended evidentiary hearings or appeals, the attorney may apply to the court for additional compensation for these services. Any such application must be accompanied by an itemization of the services rendered, showing the date, the time expended, and the identity of the attorney performing the services. The debtor must be served with a copy of the application and notified of the right to appear in court to object.

Date: 2/28/2017

Signed: _____

/s/ Sylvia Carter

Debtor(s)

/s/ Chris Pryor

Attorney for Debtor(s)

Do not sign if the fee amounts at top of this page are blank.

Debtor 1 Sylvia First Name Carter Last Name Case number (if known)

Part 6: Answer These Questions for Reporting Purposes

16. What kind of debts do you have?

16a. Are your debts primarily consumer debts? *Consumer debts* are defined in 11 U.S.C. § 101(8) as "incurred by an individual primarily for a personal, family, or household purpose."

- ☐ No. Go to line 16b.
☒ Yes. Go to line 17.

16b. Are your debts primarily business debts? *Business debts* are debts that you incurred to obtain money for a business or investment or through the operation of the business or investment.

- ☐ No. Go to line 16c.
☐ Yes. Go to line 17.

16c. State the type of debts you owe that are not consumer debts or business debts.

17. Are you filing under Chapter 7?

☒ No. I am not filing under Chapter 7. Go to line 18.

Do you estimate that after any exempt property is excluded and administrative expenses are paid that funds will be available for distribution to unsecured creditors?

- ☐ Yes. I am filing under Chapter 7. Do you estimate that after any exempt property is excluded and administrative expenses are paid that funds will be available to distribute to unsecured creditors?
☐ No.
☐ Yes.

18. How many creditors do you estimate that you owe?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000-5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25,001-50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 50-99 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5,001-10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50,001-100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100-199 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 200-999 | | |

19. How much do you estimate your assets to be worth?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$0-\$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000,001-\$10 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500,000,001-\$1 billion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,001-\$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000,001-\$50 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000,000,001-\$10 billion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,001-\$500,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000,001-\$100 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000,000,001-\$50 billion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500,001-\$1 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000,001-\$500 million | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$50 billion |

20. How much do you estimate your liabilities to be?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0-\$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000,001-\$10 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500,000,001-\$1 billion |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$50,001-\$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000,001-\$50 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000,000,001-\$10 billion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,001-\$500,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000,001-\$100 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000,000,001-\$50 billion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500,001-\$1 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000,001-\$500 million | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$50 billion |

Part 7: Sign Below

For you

I have examined this petition, and I declare under penalty of perjury that the information provided is true and correct.

If I have chosen to file under Chapter 7, I am aware that I may proceed, if eligible, under Chapter 7, 11, 12, or 13 of title 11, United States Code. I understand the relief available under each chapter, and I choose to proceed under Chapter 7.

If no attorney represents me and I did not pay or agree to pay someone who is not an attorney to help me fill out this document, I have obtained and read the notice required by 11 U.S.C. § 342(b).

I request relief in accordance with the chapter of title 11, United States Code, specified in this petition.

I understand making a false statement, concealing property, or obtaining money or property by fraud in connection with a bankruptcy case can result in fines up to \$250,000, or imprisonment for up to 20 years, or both. 18 U.S.C. §§ 152, 1541, 1519, and 3571.

X

/s/ Sylvia Carter

Signature of Debtor 1

Executed on 2/28/2017

MM / DD / YYYY

X

Signature of Debtor 2

Executed on

MM / DD / YYYY

Fill in this information to identify your case:

Debtor 1	Sylvia		Carter
	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
Debtor 2			
(Spouse, if filing)	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
United States Bankruptcy Court for the:	Northern	District of	Illinois
			(State)
Case number			
(if known)			

☐ Check if this is an amended filing

Official Form 106Dec

Declaration About an Individual Debtor's Schedules

12/15

If two married people are filing together, both are equally responsible for supplying correct information.

You must file this form whenever you file bankruptcy schedules or amended schedules. Making a false statement, concealing property, or obtaining money or property by fraud in connection with a bankruptcy case can result in fines up to \$250,000, or imprisonment for up to 20 years, or both. 18 U.S.C. §§ 152, 1341, 1519, and 3571.

Part 1: Sign Below

Did you pay or agree to pay someone who is NOT an attorney to help you fill out bankruptcy forms?

☒ No

☐ Yes. Name of person _____

Attach Bankruptcy Petition Preparer's Notice, Declaration, and Signature (Official Form 119).

Under penalty of perjury, I declare that I have read the summary and schedules filed with this declaration and that they are true and correct.

X /s/ Sylvia Carter

Signature of Debtor 1

Date 2/28/2017

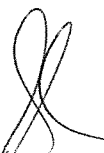
MM/DD/YYYY

X _____

Signature of Debtor 2

Date _____

MM/DD/YYYY



Debtor 1 Sylvia Carter Case number (if known)
First Name Middle Name Last Name

28. Within 2 years before you filed for bankruptcy, did you give a financial statement to anyone about your business? Include all financial institutions, creditors, or other parties.

- ☒ No
☐ Yes. Fill in the details below.

Date issued

Name MM/DD/YYYY
Number Street
City State Zip Code

Part 12: Sign Below

I have read the answers on this *Statement of Financial Affairs* and any attachments, and I declare under penalty of perjury that the answers are true and correct. I understand that making a false statement, concealing property, or obtaining money or property by fraud in connection with a bankruptcy case can result in fines up to \$250,000, or imprisonment for up to 20 years, or both. 18 U.S.C. §§ 152, 1341, 1519, and 3571.

X

/s/ Sylvia Carter
Signature of Debtor 1

Date 2/28/2017

X

Signature of Debtor 2

Date

Did you attach additional pages to Your Statement of Financial Affairs for Individuals Filing for Bankruptcy (Official Form 107)?

- ☒ No
☐ Yes

Did you pay or agree to pay someone who is not an attorney to help you fill out bankruptcy forms?

- ☒ No
☐ Yes. Name of person

Attach the *Bankruptcy Petition Preparer's Notice, Declaration, and Signature* (Official Form 119).

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
Northern District of Illinois

In re: Carter, Sylvia
Debtor(s)

Case No. _____

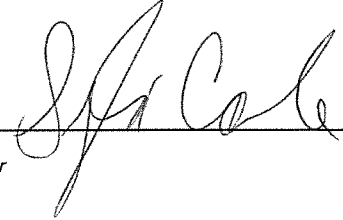
Chapter. Chapter13

VERIFICATION OF CREDITOR MATRIX

The above named Debtors hereby verify that the attached list of creditors is true and correct to the best of their knowledge.

Date: 2/28/2017

/s/ Carter, Sylvia
Carter, Sylvia
Signature of Debtor



Debtor 1 Sylvia Carter Case number (if known)
First Name Middle Name Last Name

16. Calculate the median family income that applies to you. Follow these steps:

- 16a. Fill in the state in which you live. Illinois
- 16b. Fill in the number of people in your household. 2
- 16c. Fill in the median family income for your state and size of household \$65,659.00
To find a list of applicable median income amounts, go online using the link specified in the separate instructions for this form. This list may also be available at the bankruptcy clerk's office.

17. How do the lines compare?

- 17a. ☒ Line 15b is less than or equal to line 16c. On the top of page 1 of this form, check box 1, *Disposable income is not determined under 11 U.S.C. § 1325(b)(3). Go to Part 3.* Do NOT fill out *Calculation of Disposable Income* (Official Form 122C-2).
- 17b. ☐ Line 15b is more than line 16c. On the top of page 1 of this form, check box 2, *Disposable income is determined under 11 U.S.C. § 1325(b)(3). Go to Part 3 and fill out Calculation of Disposable Income (Official Form 122C-2).* On line 39 of that form, copy your current monthly income from line 14 above.

Part 3: Calculate Your Commitment Period Under 11 U.S.C. §1325(b)(4)

18. Copy your total average monthly income from line 11. \$2,157.67
19. Deduct the marital adjustment if it applies. If you are married, your spouse is not filing with you, and you contend that calculating the commitment period under 11 U.S.C. § 1325(b)(4) allows you to deduct part of your spouse's income, copy the amount from line 13.
- 19a. If the marital adjustment does not apply, fill in 0 on line 19a. -\$0.00
- 19b. Subtract line 19a from line 18. \$2,157.67
20. Calculate your current monthly income for the year. Follow these steps:
- 20a. Copy line 19b. \$2,157.67
Multiply by 12 (the number of months in a year). **x 12**
\$25,892.04
- 20b. The result is your current monthly income for the year for this part of the form. \$25,892.04
- 20c. Copy the median family income for your state and size of household from line 16c. \$65,659.00
21. How do the lines compare?
- ☒ Line 20b is less than line 20c. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, on the top of page 1 of this form, check box 3, The commitment period is 3 years. Go to Part 4.
- ☐ Line 20b is more than or equal to line 20c. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, on the top of page 1 of this form, check box 4, The commitment period is 5 years. Go to Part 4.

Part 4: Sign Below

By signing here, I declare under penalty of perjury that the information on this statement and in any attachments is true and correct.

X /s/ Sylvia Carter
Signature of Debtor 1

Date 2/28/2017
MM/DD/YYYY

X _____
Signature of Debtor 2

Date _____
MM/DD/YYYY

If you checked 17a, do NOT fill out or file Form 122C-2.

If you checked 17b, fill out Form 122C-2 and file it with this form. On line 39 of that form, copy your current monthly income from line 14 above.

[Handwritten signature]